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is to be hoped, the reign of critical ignorance has well-nigh ceased, the numerous "spots" upon the face of the "luminary" have one by one disappeared; and this leads us to think that time and knowledge may cause the whole to vanish. The history of the critical investigations into the characters of Lear and Hamlet alone would furnish some curious illustrations of this.

Shakspeare was too good a metaphysician and psychologist to make any glaring errors of the kind referred to; and so great is our confidence in the keenness and accuracy of his metaphysical and psychological perceptions that, at the risk of being charged by such critics with a blind adoration of his great genius, we venture to assert that such psychological inaccuracies are scarcely in the nature of things, and in a large majority of instances arise more from critical misconception than from any error or mistake of the artist.

Shakspeare has ever been far in advance of all his critics, and if, as has been sufficiently shown, it has taken two centuries for them to discover a mere fractional part of what he appears to have known, we may reasonably suppose that it will yet take some decades at least, if not centuries, of critical, scientific, and intellectual development to comprehend the whole. Experience has amply shown, that, though humiliating, it is far safer to acknowledge our weakness and the imperfection of our own vision as compared with his, than to employ ourselves in seeking to discover and point out the "spots" upon the face of the great luminary. In his works, like those of a still higher and more divine order of inspiration, much that is hard to comprehend must be reserved for the future to develop, for now the feeble-eyed critic can scarcely "behold him face to face," but must contemplate him through the dim and obscure glass of his own comparatively imperfect perceptions.

**NEW PUBLICATIONS.**—Hurd & Houghton, New York, will soon publish "Six Months at the White House, with Abraham Lincoln," by F. B. Carpenter, the artist.

Also, by the same enterprising firm, "The Game of Croquet," its appointments and laws, with descriptive illustrations. By R. Fellow.

#### LAYING THE FOUNDATION STONE.

(From the Weekly Review.)

Anything that contributes to the amusement of the community is a gain to morals, and a fitting theme for the virtuous pen of the journalist. It is with peculiar pleasure that we find ourselves called upon to-day to record the complete success of a new recreation. It was inaugurated on Saturday last at Steinway's in Fourteenth street, and is called "Laying the Foundation Stone." We played it with a Mayor, a derrick, two Senators, and a field of about one hundred and fifty—but you can get along quite as well with half the number. Well, the way it is done is this: After we have all tried to write our names on a piece of parchment, and deposited our valuable photographs for the admiration of posterity, the preparation is carefully canned, and popped into a hole in the wall. The Mayor then reads the Declaration of Independence, and recites the Multiplication table—leaving out nine times as too hard. Then he gives the derrick a twist, drops a stone on the top of the box, and runs off. Then Mr. William Steinway gets up and "speaks a piece," and chivies the other boys, and they all run up stairs for their innings. The game was played splendidly on Saturday, and took immensely with a fire audience. Everyone is hoping that somebody else may lay a foundation stone next week. The ceremony is new in America, but there is nothing in our constitution to prevent its becoming popular. At all events the thing is done. It struck us as a little singular that the foundation stone should be laid in the first floor of the building, but this is only a matter of fashion. If a pretty music hall were to take it into her head to lay a foundation stone on the roof it would not surprise us; nor, indeed, would it be any of our business.

#### FOREIGN LITERARY INTELLIGENCE.

The Queen of Spain has ordered a collection to be made of the valuable records and manuscript contained in the monastic libraries of that country. The collection will be called the National Historical Archives, and will be one of the richest of the world. The Moorish records and the journals of Spanish cavaliers and priests in the New World from Columbus down, including the official records of the Antilles, Mexico, and all South America while under the Spanish government, would make a collection far more curious than the manuscripts of Ancient Greece and Rome, and are only inferior in value to them.

The London *Court Journal* says:

"The pirating of English books by Americans is awful; it far exceeds that of the American books by the English, and that is bad enough in all conscience."

So we judge from recent publications. It is disgraceful on both sides, and like all wrong unprofitable. If a publisher would consult his real good, he would always give the name of an author, the country in which a book was written, and the circumstances under which it first saw the light. A good reader rarely ever touches a book till he knows something of the author and his immediate surroundings.

Mr. Dickens has recently enlisted enthusiastically in an effort to put a stop to this disgraceful pirating.

A description of the ruins of Pompeii has been published at Leipsic. The author of the book is Herr Overbeck, a well known artist. Both tourists to that spot, and connoisseurs of antiquity, say it is well done and instructive.

"Some time since," says the *Pays*, "a journal offered a prize for the best new novel, and received in reply 1800 manuscripts!"

A correspondent of the *Pall Mall Gazette* says:

Mrs. Somerville, now in her 87th year, has just completed a vast work, embodying all the latest results of science in relation to the ultimate particles of matter. Those who have seen the manuscript are assured that when the book appears this summer it will be found to surpass, rather than fall short of, the merits of the 'Physical Geography,' and 'Connection of the Sciences,' which, half a century ago gave her the first rank among intellectual women.

"Boz" receives £2,000 for the series of thirty readings he is now giving.

According to Mr. Jules Simon, there are 4,225 booksellers in France.

Of Miss Braddon's "Lady Audley's Secret" no fewer than 19,000 copies were taken by the trade.

There are in the United States—clergymen, 37,529; teachers, 110,469; professional authors, only 216; editors, 2,994; publishers, 917; printers, 23,106; booksellers only 1861.

Mr. Henry Kingsley's last novel, "Leighton Court," has recently been republished in Boston.

The authorship of "Ecce Homo" it now attributed to Mr. Gladstone, the learned and eloquent English Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The magnum opus of the day, Napoleon's "L'Histoire de Jules Cæsar," has been published, the second volume at Paris, in the same style as the first, and judging from the subjects upon which the learned author is called upon to treat, the Gallic wars described so lucidly by Cæsar himself, the two descents upon Britain

also narrated by him, and the civil wars of Rome, in which he was the principal actor, it will be the most interesting and valuable book of the year.

A pleasant waif from the literary and dramatic world of Paris, is the mistake of a telegraph clerk to whom a *commissionnaire* delivered a written message which he had been directed to despatch. On reading it, the clerk stared and inquired by whom the message was sent, to which the messenger replied: "A gentleman living in the Rue la Fontaine." The clerk requested the man to step into his office and take a seat. Meanwhile a policeman was summoned, and the message shown to him. It ran thus, "I have thought of a better and more expeditious mode of killing Faure," signed Mery. The agent started for M. Mery's residence; he was in bed, but was in the act of announcing to his collaborator, M. Danville, with whom he is writing "Don Carlos," for which Verdi is composing the music, that he had thought of another mode of dispatching the Marquis of Rosa (which part was to be acted by Faure), than by a pistol shot, as in Schiller's tragedy, and had telegraphed to that effect to him.

#### PARIS ITEMS.

At the session of the musical section of the Academy of Fine Arts (Paris), held the 12th of May, for the election of a member to fill the place of the late Clapisson, Gounod was elected at the first turn of the ballot. The number of voters were thirty-six—the voices being thus divided: Gounod 19, Felicien David 16, Victor Massé 1.

ABBE LISZT left Paris Tuesday evening, 22d May, for Rome. On the day of his departure the illustrious artist received from the Emperor Maximilian, the *brevet* of Commander of the Imperial Order of Notre Dame de Guadeloupe.

It is asserted that Rossini has addressed to the Pope a *mémoire*, calling the attention of his Holiness to different modifications to be made in church music, of a nature tending to make it rise from its decadence. This *mémoire* proposes, also, the abrogation of the austere law against the introduction of female voices into most of the churches.

THE excellent pianist, Brassin, has been appointed Professor at the Royal Conservatoire at Berlin. He will take possession of this place of honor next August.

THE first representation of de Flotow's new work, "Zilda," will soon take place at l'Opera Comique. A great success is expected. The libretto is written after one of the tales of the "Mille et un Jours."

On the 16th of May, there took place at the old Chateau of Neuilly, (in one of the beautiful suburbs of Paris), the annual concert of "Notre Dame des Arts." This interesting institution, founded by Madame la Vicomtesse d'Anglars, is consecrated to the artistic education of daughters of painters, musicians and men of letters. It is a conservatoire in a convent. Nothing is more charming than these annual concerts, which take place in the spring, in a large hot-house opening on a beautiful park. There we admire, in the soft month of May, youth, music, and flowers, blended in the most suave tones; a divine tableau of poetry, whose frame and support is Charity, through love of art.

Rossini, that good old musical pater-familias, was present on this occasion, and encouraged the efforts of the talented pupils by his repeated plaudits.